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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 CAIRO 000470

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ELA, NEA/ARP, AF/SPG

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PREF](#) [KPKO](#) [PHUM](#) [KICR](#) [KISL](#) [EAID](#) [QA](#) [LY](#) [ER](#)

CD, SU, EG

SUBJECT: DARFURI LEADERS IN CAIRO SUPPORT ICC ARREST
WARRANT, CONDEMN NGO EXPULSIONS

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Classified By: Minister Counselor for Economic and Political Affairs
William R. Stewart for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. Key Points

-- (C) We met with Cairo office representatives from the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), Sudanese Liberation Army (SLA)-Minni Minawi, SLA-Unity, The Sons of the Fur (who have strong ties to SLA-Abdel Wahid al-Nur), and the Darfuri Arab Democratic Popular Front (DPF) on March 8, 10 and 12 to gauge local Darfuri community reaction to the ICC's arrest warrant for Sudanese President Bashir.

-- (C) All of the Darfuri leaders support the ICC decision to issue an arrest warrant for Bashir and all condemned the Government of Sudan's (GOS) expulsion of NGOs.

-- (C) SLA-Unity and SLA-Minawi would like to see the Government of Egypt (GOE) take a larger role in helping to resolve the crisis in Darfur. JEM and Fur felt Egypt is too biased toward the GOS to have a role in the Darfur peace talks.

-- (C) None of the groups view the Arab League as a fair mediator in Darfur. Only the JEM said that the AL could play a facilitator role in peace negotiations.

2. (S) Comment: While the Darfuri groups in Cairo agree that Bashir should be arrested, and the NGOs should remain in the country, they agree on little else. The JEM and DPF leaders that we met were much more cerebral and strategic than the SLA leaders. The JEM conferred about our questions and coordinated their answers, and the DPF Secretary General consistently referred to decisions taken at a recent "Secretariat meeting." The JEM were the only group to mention that China's continued support for the GOS prevents a resolution to the situation in Sudan. The DPF addressed the GOS' intent to use Islamic groups to aid in the defense against the "Western-backed ICC." The Sons of the Fur were comfortable "playing the victims," and lacked a plan for how to represent their cause. The only point where they showed some direction was when we discussed Abdel Wahid al-Nur and his group's desire to participate in any U.S.-backed peace talks. SLA Unity's leader focused the need to involve all

internal factions and regional countries in the peace process, but he provided no direction for how to bring the parties together. SLA Minawi leaders are upset that the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) was never implemented. The group would like the USG to push for the DPA as the basis for all future negotiations or would like to get out of the deal and renegotiate with the GOS. End Comment.

Unanimous Support for the ICC Arrest Warrant

¶3. (C) On March 8-12, we met with local Darfuri leaders to get their views on the ICC arrest warrant for Sudanese President Bashir, the effects of this warrant on the local Darfuri community, and ascertain their observations on the roles that Egypt and the Arab League can play in future peace negotiations.

¶4. (C) Mohamed Sharaf, head of the JEM's Cairo office and Idris Mahmoud, head of JEM's Europe office told us that JEM believes the arrest warrant against Bashir is a "victory for justice and the victims in Darfur." Sharaf stated that Bashir should present himself before the court and justify his innocence claim. He said the JEM does not support an Article 16 deferment of the ICC procedures because this would be against peace and justice. Ibrahim Ishaq, Director of the Sons of the Fur Organization, which has close ties to SLA-Abdel Wahid al-Nur, told us that the GOS targeted the Fur people for ethnic cleansing and they support the decision of the ICC to arrest Bashir. Gamal Hamed, the SLA Unity representative in Cairo stated his organization supports the arrest warrant as part of the process for justice and human rights because the GOS "used starvation, denial of medical care and rape as weapons of war." Mohamed Nour, advisor to

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Minni Minawi, told us that the ICC arrest warrant will help Sudan achieve justice, which must precede any peace deal. He stated that arrest warrant is a separate issue from future peace talks, and its deferment should not be a carrot for progress on the peace front. Nour said that the arrest warrant will not affect the CPA or DPA. He stated that Ali Osman Taha was the architect of the CPA and suggested he could easily take over the leadership of the National Congress Party. Osama Hassan, Secretary General of the Democratic Popular Front that he supported the arrest warrant for Bashir because he was responsible for the air campaign that targeted Darfuri civilians.

¶5. (C) All the leaders stated that the GOS organized the demonstrations against the ICC arrest warrant including those in El Fasher. Sharaf and Nour said that Sudanese Security forced students, workers, and IDPs to participate in the rallies under the threat of arrest. However, they stated that President Bashir is comfortable enough with the GOS's control over Darfur to appear in public.

NGO's Expulsion Dangerous to Humanitarian Situation

¶6. (C) Mahmoud called the GOS's expulsion of NGOs from Darfur a "war crime." He said that China's objection to condemning the action was a negative message that it will support the GOS no matter what the humanitarian cost. Noura Sharaf al-Din, Head of the Fur's Women and Children Committee told us that there had already been two deaths in the Kalma Camp that were related to the NGO shut down. Hamed stated that without the NGOs there were no other organizations to provide food and medicine for the people in Darfur. Nour said that SLA-Minawi believes the expulsion will only worsen the humanitarian situation in Darfur. He said that the inability of the U.N. to prevent this action shows that the world is not concerned with the humanitarian issues in Darfur. Hassan told us that the expulsion of the NGOs was an "irresponsible

act" by the GOS. He said that the NGO that were targeted supply about half of the humanitarian aid in Darfur, and their inability to work will only worsen the situation by subjecting more Darfuris to starvation and hunger.

Doha Talks Not Representative

17. (C) Sharaf told us that there is value in the Doha talks because Qatar is neutral and a good mediator. However, he was quick to state that the GOS already violated the "Goodwill Agreement" that was signed in February by kicking out the NGOs and failing to release JEM prisoners. Both the Fur and SLA-Minawi stated that the talks in Doha would not work because they only included the JEM and the GOS. Nour told us that "Qatar doesn't understand Darfur." Abdel Karim Abdel Mowaly, Vice President of the Sons of the Fur, told us that a Zaghawa/Sudanese Government deal that excludes the Fur could not possibly resolve the situation in Darfur. Hamed told us that SLA Unity does not support the Doha Talks because "Qatar is only interested in saving Bashir." As a result, SLA Unity will not interact with either Qatar of UN/AU Mediator Bassole. Hassan said the DPF will not negotiate with the Bashir government. However, he surprisingly supports the JEM-GOS Doha talks because the talks "will unite the Islamists under the same banner" and make it easier to oppose Khalil Ibrahim and the JEM.

Mixed Reaction to Potential Role of Egypt

18. (C) Sharaf told us that JEM considers Egypt's position unacceptable because the GOE is completely biased toward the GOS. He accused Egypt of "obstructing peace talks in Doha." Ishaq said that the Fur community is not supportive of Egypt's role as a mediator. He stated that Egyptian State Security will not even allow them to express their dissent with Khartoum. Hamed told us that Egypt has always viewed

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Sudan in terms of its Nile waters interest, but recently had changed (NFI). He opined that Egypt has a role to play in resolving the crisis in Darfur because "Egypt is better than Qatar." He mentioned that the GOE had sent an invitation, through its embassy in Chad, inviting SLA Unity to participate in a conference on Darfur in Cairo in April (NFI). Nour told us that SLA-Minawi would like to see Egypt more involved in the Darfur issue, but he opined that the GOE is "more worried about Arab problems in Gaza than African problems in Darfur." He also stated that Egypt does not have the money necessary to play a principle role, unless its efforts are backed by the U.S., UAE and Saudi Arabia. Hassan said that Egypt's only role was in supporting Bashir or the NCP because Egypt only wants stability. However, he noted that Egypt is looking to engage with the rebel groups to counter Libyan efforts to unite the Darfur factions, and to "hedge its bets" in Sudan. As evidence, he said Egyptian State Security is now allowing his group more latitude to express their opposition to the Bashir government.

Arab League Not a Mediator

19. (C) All the leaders stated that the Arab League (AL) is not a good mediator because it favored Khartoum and failed to act in Darfur for the first five years of the conflict. Only JEM admitted that the AL performed well in the role of facilitator during the Doha talks. Hassan said the League was an extension of the Egyptian MFA and stated that Khartoum recent rejection of Moussa's proposal may change the AL's position on Sudan.

¶10. (C) Sharaf and Mahmoud told us that JEM will continue to negotiate with the GOS, but not with President Bashir. Sharaf told us that JEM leaders believe "peace is the strategic choice." Sharaf and Mahmoud laid out six key factors to reaching peace in Darfur. Humanitarian issues are paramount and China's unequivocal support for the GOS sends the wrong message. The international community needs to establish an "oil for food" program in Sudan so that the GOS does not buy weapons, but rather feeds its people. "No fly zones" should be enforced over Darfur to protect the citizens from further GOS aggression. The international community must insist on justice because "there can be no peace with impunity." JEM will continue to support the Qatari Initiative for Peace, but China needs to play a role to encourage GOS implementation of agreements. Libya and Egypt are peace spoilers and must be kept from interfering in the peace negotiations.

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Fur Community Looking to be Included in Process

¶11. (C) Ishaq told us that a peace process that includes the Fur and all Darfuri factions is needed. He stated that current peace talks have only addressed Zaghawa needs. Ishaq advocated for a U.S.-led initiative to unite the factions and bring them all to the table. He told us that his brother, a key advisor to Abdel Wahid al-Nur, said that SLA-Nour would attend U.S.-backed peace talks.

SLA Focused on Humanitarian Crisis, Regional Solution

¶12. (C) Hamed said that the first priority was to stop the suffering in Darfur. "Without progress on the humanitarian front such as provision of food and medicine, there can be no dialogue." He told us that the SLA believes regional countries like Chad, Egypt, Eritrea, and Libya should play a role in resolving the crisis. Hamed mentioned that Libya is trying to unite various factions and tribes to bring them to the negotiating table, and he hoped this would lead to a

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Darfuri "national group" composed of Fur, Masalit, Zaghawa and Arabs that could enter into "serious political dialogue" with the GOS. However, Hamed noted that there was a need to have a party at the table to compel the GOS to implement agreements because the "the Government signs agreements and does the opposite."

Abuja is the Basis for Future Peace Talks

¶13. (C) Nour told us that SLA-Minawi is upset that the USG supports the Doha talks because Doha disregards the U.S.-brokered Darfur Peace Agreement, signed by Minni Minawi in Abuja in 2006. He said that all future peace negotiations should be based on the Abuja Agreement. However, Nour was pessimistic, saying that nothing will change on the ground in Darfur in the next six months. He stated that the GOS can handle the security situation and no rebel group is strong enough to challenge the government.

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Fearing of Re-Islamization and Land Grab Efforts

¶14. (S) Hassan told us that the GOS, in order to oppose the Western-backed ICC, is moving to toward hosting Islamic movements similar to Iran. He said that Khartoum's message is "either leave us alone or we will use Islamic cells to

defend ourselves." Hassan said that the GOS released Hassan al-Turabi to re-brandish its Islamic credentials and allow it to host "Islamic militant groups." Hassan also said that if pressure from the West continues the GOS will hold the CPA hostage. When pushed he admitted that this is not a smart move, but he opined that Bashir is not intelligent, and the pressure is forcing the government into "chaotic thinking."

¶15. (S) Hassan called on the USG and UNSC to impose a "no-fly zone" over Darfur to protect those that support the ICC and efforts of Western NGO's. In the absence of UNSC action, he told us that Darfuri groups plan to use their military resource to grab areas of land to protect themselves and their supporters.

¶16. (U) Minimize considered.

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